



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: BEAR

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW WORD FOR BEAR?

- It's *dov* (דוב).
- The root of the word *dov*, *davav*, means to “move *gently*” or “glide.”
- But in the Bible the bear is compared to the lion for ferocity (Amos 5:19).
- Why do you think that bears have a Hebrew name that means “move gently,” when we know they can be very dangerous?
- If you met up with a bear in the woods, what would you do?

IT'S TIME FOR THE BEAR QUIZ!

- How many different kinds of bears do you know about? (Brown bears [includes Grizzly and Kodiak], Polar bears, Black bears, Sun bears from China, and Indochina, Sloth bears from India and Sri Lanka, and Spectacled bears from the Andes Mountains of South America.)
- How much do bears weigh? (Grizzly, Kodiak, and Polar bears, 1700-1800 pounds; Black bears and Sun bears as little as 150 pounds).
- How do you think it's possible for bears to hibernate, going without food for three to seven months? (They eat a lot beforehand and put on body fat. Their heart rate drops from 45 to 10 beats per minute.)
- How long do you think bears usually live? (15 to 30 years)
- What kinds of things should you do to keep bears away from your campsite when you go camping?
- What kinds of noises do bears make? (They roar when injured and “huff” or make chomping or clacking sounds with their teeth when they want to warn off another animal or a person.)

A LONG TIME AGO, THERE WAS A MAN WHO WAS KNOWN TO BE ONE OF THE MOST RIGHTEOUS OF HIS TIME—RABBI CHANINA BEN DOSA WAS HIS NAME.

- Although he was very poor, he was known for always respecting and protecting the property of others.
- Once he was told that some goats he was keeping for someone else were causing problems—“your goats are causing damage,” he was told.
- He answered, “If they really cause damage, may bears devour them; if not, may each of them bring a bear impaled on its horns this evening.”
- That evening, each goat brought home a bear on its horns. (Taanit 25a)
- How are we to understand this?

1. We would certainly agree that if goats brought home bears on their horns, it would be miraculous.
 2. We don't know what actually happened, but this story is trying to teach us something.
 3. So why would Rabbi Chanina rely on a miracle to deal with the problem of the goats causing damage?
 4. Well, he would already have done all within *his* power to control them, because that's the kind of person he was.
 5. Why would God perform such a miracle?
 6. We don't know, but sometimes when we have done everything within our power and it's not enough, we are aided by seemingly miraculous events.
- So what do you think we can learn from this story?
 1. Goodness comes into the world in two ways:
 2. We must do all within our power, and
 3. Leave the rest to God.



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